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Utilization of the development dividend

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report contains proposals for use of the development dividend following the establishment of the Development Account, as discussed in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950; see in particular actions 21 and 22) and further elaborated upon in the addendum thereto entitled "Creating a dividend for development" (A/51/950/Add.5).

2. The General Assembly, in paragraph 6 of its resolution 52/235, entitled "Development account", requested the Secretary-General to submit proposals on the use of the funds available under a new section 34 of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. In paragraph 4 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include programmatic objectives and direction of the Development Account. The report of the Secretary-General on utilization of the development dividend (E/1998/81) was submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998; the present report includes further details on the proposals made in that report.

3. In accordance with that resolution, the present report has been prepared and is submitted for consideration. The report contains proposals that have been drawn up within $13.065 million appropriation to maximize its impact. They draw upon and contribute to the relevant priorities and subprogrammes established in the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001. However, the proposed projects will complement and not substitute existing activities.

4. The Programme Manager for the development account is the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, who is the Convener of the Executive Committee-Economic and Social Affairs, which comprises the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the regional commissions, the United Nations University, and the research/training institutes. The Executive Committee, *inter alia*, strengthens policy coherence and cost-effectiveness in the economic and social area. One of its main objectives is to maximize programme impact and minimize administrative costs. The Executive Committee, in its statement of objectives, expressed the need to facilitate a more effective participation of developing countries in global processes and to achieve a better balance between the global and regional dimensions of development in terms of analysis, norm setting and technical assistance. The current proposals have been formulated by individual entities comprising the Executive Committee, in the context of these broad objectives, as well as in the light of the report of the Secretary-General on utilization of the Development Account (A/52/848). Those entities will also be responsible for their implementation.

5. The Agenda for Development strongly emphasizes the role of the United Nations system for revitalizing development. In a world where globalization, liberalization and interdependence have become key features of the world economy, the most important challenge for developing countries is the realization of development, which, *inter alia*, calls for economic growth and favourable external conditions. That is the larger setting for the proposals contained in the present report.

6. The performance criteria for financing project proposals from the Development Account are indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the Development Account (A/52/1009). The projects for the utilization of the Development Account have been developed on the basis of those criteria. For the biennium 1998–1999, the projects focus on the concept of networking for development as a key means to broaden the benefits of the process of globalization and to avoid the risk of marginalization of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in the world economy. The concept is mainly concerned with the way in which the United Nations can facilitate and contribute to the participation of developing countries in global and regional information networks.

7. Section II below describes the overall concept of networking for development. Section III contains a number of specific proposals formulated and agreed upon by the members of the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs, which are introduced for funding by the Development Account.

8. At its thirty-eighth session, during its consideration of the programme narrative for section 7A, Economic and social affairs, and section 26, Public information, the Committee on Programme Coordination noted with concern that without suitable indicators to measure progress towards the accomplishment of objectives, eventual evaluation could not fully determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the programme, and recommended that improvements be effected by better formulation of objectives and the inclusion of indicators of achievement (see A/53/16, Part 1, paras. 179 and 180, and 206 and 207). Moreover, during several informal consultations on the development account, the view was repeatedly expressed that project

proposals should contain measurable indicators of progress. Consequently, in keeping with the views expressed by the Committee on Programme Coordination, efforts have been made in the present report to develop project designs that would allow an assessment of progress in terms of accomplishments and impact. Accordingly, the project design for each proposed project – in addition to providing background information to the problem to be addressed, the relation to the medium-term plan, the duration of the project, the proposed activities and estimated resource requirements – sets forth the objective(s), the expected results and relevant indicators of expected achievements. The objective expresses the overall desired accomplishment that the Organization wishes to achieve during the period through the implementation of the project in question. Expected results are the changes or other benefits that will accrue to the end-users or recipients of the project activities in the course of striving to achieve the objective. In relation to the objective(s), the expected results are generally of a more concrete nature. Indicators are measurable features that will help to determine whether and to what extent the expected results have been achieved. They are derived from the expected results, and are designed to provide an objective and specific scale against which progress can be measured. Indicators look beyond the mere quantity of the activities and outputs of the projects and attempt to measure their impact.

II. Networking for development

9. The rationale for this approach is that full and effective participation in the emerging global information network is increasingly of fundamental importance for a country to benefit from globalization and to avoid marginalization. Information technology has made commerce, banking, entertainment, services, the assembly line, education and health care all fundamentally different today than they were only a decade ago. Today, information technology goes far beyond mass media communication, offering possibilities for change and new perspectives on development. Information technology permits rapid dissemination of ideas, processes, and supplements education, science, health care and culture.

10. This approach has been recently reiterated by the Commission for Social Development in its resolution 36/1, which contains agreed conclusions for attention and follow-up by the Economic and Social Council that, *inter alia*, indicated that information is not only a commodity. Access to information is essential for full participation in all spheres of life, including the global economy. In its resolution 1998/29, the Economic and Social Council also reiterated the high priority that it attaches to ensuring easy, economical, uncomplicated and unhindered access for States Members of the United Nations and observers, through, *inter alia*, their permanent missions, to the growing number of computerized databases and information systems and services of the United Nations. Policies should be formulated to promote new, cost-effective, inclusive and participatory approaches in the production, dissemination and use of information. To avoid the widening of the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor, particularly the gap between developed and developing countries, strategies must be developed to prioritize and promote adequate investment, including access to technology, in order to provide equal opportunity for all. In particular, measures should be taken to promote access by developing countries to the new information superhighway.

11. Information flows – and consequently information technology – have been and are a major engine of globalization. However, many developing countries are still at the margin of the global economy, and will be unable to participate in it positively without a significant enhancement of their ability to connect to major international information networks. Furthermore, developing countries' data requirements for economic, social and environmental policy management, including monitoring and implementation of national and regional programmes, as well as requirements emanating from the recently held United Nations global conferences, are exceptionally high.

12. Providing information technology presents a low-cost solution for the better integration of developing countries in the world economy, where timely information plays a vital role. Information technology contributes to a better integration of developing countries in the world economy, and it creates the conditions in which exchanges of experiences and best practices within and among developing countries, as well as between developed and developing countries, can take place. Effective country-level follow-up of recent United Nations global conferences calls for institutional capacities to integrate economic, social and environmental aspects in development decision-making. Improved access to modern information technology will facilitate such integration.

13. Information technology sets the stage for increasingly indispensable networking, not only among policy makers in developing countries but also among research institutions in these countries. Furthermore, information technology will make it possible to have such networking encompass

linkages to the world at large, including the United Nations policy analysis capabilities and its research institutes.

14. The networking of experts must have a clear purpose. The many recommendations of the cycle of United Nations conferences on capacity-building can provide this focus. The efforts that are being made at the country level and that are supported by the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, *inter alia*, can be strengthened by more effective arrangements for exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas between countries.

15. In his reform proposal, the Secretary-General announced his intentions of increasing the use of information technology and strengthening South-South cooperation. Focusing the utilization of the development dividend on information technology and networking for development should be an important contributor to this goal.

16. The eight current proposals are set out below.

III. Proposals

A. Promotion of electronic commerce (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development)

Objectives

17. Under the overall goal of promoting the development of developing countries in the context of globalization and interdependence, the objective proposed is to strengthen the capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition for trading at lower costs through electronic commerce.

Background

18. Electronic commerce is attracting attention in multilateral discussions due to its potential impact on international trade and development. It offers excellent opportunities to trade at lower cost through the elimination of intermediation and participation in global markets. Currently, these opportunities have not been fully identified and taken advantage of by developing countries and countries in transition due to information gaps, high cost and lack of external support in the start-up stages. The United Nations system can play a catalytic role by providing information, equipment and the networking capabilities through a strengthening of the Global Trade Point Network operated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Relation to medium-term plan

19. The proposal is within the scope and priorities of the medium-term plan, under programme 9 (Trade and development), particularly subprogramme 9.4 (Services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency), and will complement relevant programme activities in that area. It will realize distinct results within two bienniums.

Expected results

20. The implementation of the project will result in (a) the elimination of some of the obstacles to participating in electronic commerce and increased access to physical network, resources and technology, and (b) enhanced awareness of decision makers and negotiators from developing countries and countries in transition about the nature and issues related to electronic commerce.

Indicators

21. Indicators will include: use of electronic commerce by Government officials/decision makers who participated in training programmes; number of hits on the Global Trade Point Network (GTPNet) Web site; number of target countries using proposed new electronic commerce software; and number of respondents to survey indicating that they have acquired understanding of (nature and issues related to) electronic commerce through training materials provided by the project.

Duration

22. The following duration is proposed: 1999–2001.

Proposed activities

23. The following activities are proposed:

(a) Development and maintenance of information exchange and policy analysis frameworks, particularly for government officials in developing countries and countries in transition, on (i) the impact of current proposals made in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Trade Organization and elsewhere for a global framework for electronic commerce, and (ii) the nature and implications of potential internationally agreed commitments/standards in the area of trade facilitation and electronic commerce concerning government policies on the different sectors involved in issues related to electronic commerce;

(b) Analyses of the effects of internationally adopted documentary standards and business practices for electronic commerce (at both government and industry levels) on

businesses in developing countries and countries in transition; two high-level expert meetings to discuss the conclusions and recommendations of the above studies;

(c) Expert assistance and advice provided to the Governments on policy issues relating to trade facilitation and electronic commerce; trade points on the setting up and marketing of electronic commerce services for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) clients;

(d) Two round-table conferences on electronic commerce, bringing together Governments, the private sector and civil society;

(e) Development of specialized software, such as a database management system for electronic trading opportunities from the Global Trade Point Network, and dissemination through the network of trade points and the GTP Net Web site; enrichment of the GTPNet Web site through user-friendly design and the development of interactive features to improve communication with clients;

(f) Preparation of computer-assisted training courses for SMEs in developing countries and countries with economies in transition on (i) export and import practices in the age of electronic commerce, (ii) international payments in electronic commerce, (iii) freight forwarding and electronic commerce, and (iv) international marketing, with a particular focus on the use of the Internet; dissemination of information about electronic commerce, with a focus on issues of relevance for developing countries and countries in transition;

(g) Organization of a training-of-trainers course for participants from 10 pilot countries.

(For resource requirements, see annex)

B. Capacity-building in economic and social policy analysis in Africa through the networking of expertise (Economic Commission for Africa)

Objectives

24. Under the overall goal of assisting the understanding by the international community of emerging challenges and persistent problems in global development, the objective proposed is to achieve more informed and broad-based economic and social policy-making in Africa at the national level, through a network of development expertise on the region.

Background

25. Besides the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which has the responsibility to advise Governments on urgent national and regional policy issues, other institutions and independent researchers in and outside Africa also undertake research activities relevant to the African policy environment. Linking these institutions and providing results of their policy analysis more directly to decision makers would add value to and increase the policy impact of their work in the continent. The proposal will enable ECA to tap network-affiliated expertise in a cost-effective way to amass critical talent on behalf of the region, and to make available to Member States relevant advice in a timely manner. By teaming up with ECA, the networks and their affiliated policy researchers would enjoy the benefit of having a more direct impact on policy outcomes in ECA Member States. In the implementation of the proposal, ECA will mainly play the role of facilitator catalyst and serve as a clearing house for best practices and a source of African development information.

Relation to medium-term plan

26. The proposal is within the scope and priorities of the medium-term plan, under programme 14 (Economic and social development in Africa), particularly subprogramme 14.1 (Facilitating economic and social policy analysis), and will complement relevant programme activities in that area. It will offer a low-cost solution to developing countries in networking of development expertise, and will realize distinct results within two bienniums.

Expected results

27. The implementation of the project will result in the strengthening of a network of development expertise on Africa with and among research centres and individual experts, and enhanced analytical and applied skills at the national policy-making level in support of economic and social policy-making.

Indicators

28. Indicators will include: number of research institutions in/outside Africa participating in the network; number of electronic communications between members of the network; number of electronic visits to databases; number of researchers and interns who have completed exchange visits within the network; number of studies completed and disseminated on behalf of the network; and number of research institutions/researchers indicating that skills/knowledge have been acquired from use of the

network and have been applied in government-sponsored research.

Duration

29. The following duration is proposed: 1999–2001.

Proposed activities

30. The following activities are proposed:

(a) Undertaking studies of common national policy issues, such as trade and exchange regimes, structural adjustment policies and private-sector promotion policies; undertaking analysis of subregional problems, such as economic integration, transportation and standardization issues, and water and natural resources management; conducting studies on Africa-wide issues and issues facing Africa, versus the rest of the world, such as global environmental topics, international trade, monetary arrangements and external debt negotiations;

(b) Strengthening communications infrastructure through electronic connectivity with the target network institutions;

(c) Organizing an annual network partners forum;

(d) Setting up a visiting scholars' programme at ECA to increase the pool of professionals with hands-on experience in policy analysis and operations;

(e) Implementing a staff exchange between research institutions to pool expertise for its maximum usage in the region;

(f) Setting up a fellowship programme for young African professionals to familiarize them with and contribute to the research and policy operations of ECA, Member States and the network, and to prepare these young people for possible career assignments to network organizations and Member States Governments;

(g) Establishing and sharing common databases in the networks to increase the availability, quality and accessibility of basic research inputs;

(h) Developing research methodology expertise in the network.

(For resource requirements, see annex)

C. Extension of access of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to Mercure satellite telecommunication system for interconnectivity in environmental information and data (United Nations Environment Programme)

Objectives

31. Under the overall goal of promoting the development of developing countries in the context of globalization and increasing interdependence, the objective proposed is to increase the capacity of Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement more effective environmental and natural resources management through the use of Mercure satellite telecommunication earth stations.

Background

32. In November 1997, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launched the Mercure satellite telecommunication system. The system is intended to provide a high-speed satellite telecommunication capability for environmental information and data exchange. Currently, 16 countries have operational earth stations under the Mercure system. For decision makers in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, the absence of access to a high-speed telecommunication system is a serious obstacle to obtaining internationally available information and data. Even for countries that have connectivity on the Internet, access at very high costs is a serious impediment. The proposal aims to provide selected developing countries and countries with economies in transition with the basic Mercure satellite telecommunication earth stations and the associated local area network capacity (optional) with a view to strengthening their capabilities to access and exchange environmental and sustainable development information and data.

Relation to medium-term plan

33. The proposal is within the scope and priorities of the medium-term plan, under programme 10 (Environment), particularly subprogramme 10.5 (Global and regional servicing and support), and will complement relevant programme activities in that area. It will offer a low-cost solution to developing countries in environmental and natural resources management, and will deliver distinct results within two bienniums.

Expected results

34. The implementation of the project will result in improved exchange facilities and access of Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to information and data relating to environment and sustainable development.

Indicators

35. Indicators will include: number of earth stations installed and fully operational; and number of countries indicating that data obtained from Mercure system is used in environmental and natural resources management decisions.

Duration

36. The following duration is proposed: 1999–2001.

Activities

37. The following activities are proposed:

(a) Provision of Mercure earth stations (type B specification) and associated equipment;

(b) Provision of a small-scale local area network system (optional);

(c) Provision of training for earth station managers and associated computer network officers;

(d) Provision of technical assistance during the duration of the project on the use of the Mercure system to access environmental information and data to facilitate environmental planning and management;

(e) Support to the global Mercure system (satellite transponder).

(For resource requirements, see annex)

D. Computer and telecommunication system for international and national drug control (United Nations International Drug Control Programme)

Objectives

38. Under the overall goal of promoting the developing of developing countries in the context of globalization and increasing interdependence, objectives proposed are to increase the capacity of participating Governments for monitoring and management of the production, manufacture, consumption, stocks and confiscation of seizures of substances and preparations containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals.

Background

39. The production, manufacture of and trade in psychoactive drugs and the chemicals needed for their illicit manufacture should be controlled nationally and internationally. The purpose of control is to prevent diversion of substance into illicit channels, and to ensure that countries obtain the quantities that they need for medical, scientific and other licit purposes. Monitoring and managing movements of controlled substances is a complex process because it involves numerous partners. Information needs to be exchanged between commercial companies, national drug control administrations, customs officials and the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board. To facilitate the process, a computer-based system, the Computer and Telecommunication System for International and National Drug Control, has been designed and is available to strengthen the management and control of licit movements of psychoactive drugs and precursor chemicals, and to enhance timeliness of information exchange at the national and international levels. The system primarily enables national administrations to keep track of all individual transactions in a computerized database. It handles issuance of import-export authorizations, certificates and pre-notifications with respect to international licit trade. The system has been developed in three separate phases. After collecting requirements from Governments during 1990–1994, the first phase was the actual development and test of the software package (1995–1996). The second phase covered implementation of the system in 25 countries (1997–1998). The third phase, covered under the present proposal, involves the application of the system in more countries, particularly developing countries, and its further substantive development. It will be achieved through the distribution, installation and training of the Computer and Telecommunication System for International and National Drug Control, as well as the addition of new modules covering additional aspects of demand reduction, such as an international drug abuse assessment system, and modules on supply reduction, illicit trafficking and law enforcement intelligence activities.

Relation to medium-term plan

40. The proposal is within the scope and priorities of the medium-term plan, under programme 13 (International drug control), particularly subprogramme 13.3 (Prevention and reduction of drug abuse, elimination of illicit crops and

suppression of illicit drug trafficking), and will complement relevant programme activities in that area. It offers a low-cost solution to increasing the capacity of participating countries in the area of international and national drug control, and will realize distinct results within two bienniums.

Expected results

41. The implementation of the project will result in the Computer and Telecommunication System for International and National Drug Control being installed and effectively used in participating countries. The system will offer support to Member States in the areas of data collection, analysis and other aspects of international and national drug control, while reducing the burden on Governments for manual data-gathering, maintenance and exchange.

Indicators

42. Indicators will include: number of countries where the Computer and Telecommunication System for International and National Drug Control has been installed and effectively used; and feedback from national users of the system with regard to its usefulness and effectiveness.

Duration

43. The following duration is proposed: 1999–2001.

Activities

44. The following activities are proposed:

(a) Installation of the specialized software to enhance the capacity to access, develop and utilize knowledge for the formulation of prevention and control policies, both nationally and internationally;

(b) Establishing means for data-secure information exchange among partners in international drug control, such as national health authorities, national law enforcement authorities, drug control councils, regional bodies etc., ensuring that national sovereignty and domestic data-protection regulations are fully met;

(c) Promoting, through advanced technology, easy and economic information exchange, international and national cooperation, and elaborating upon information collection methodologies and standards for greater application worldwide.

(For resource requirements, see annex)

E. Capacity-building and networking for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda in least developed countries (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements)

Objectives

45. Under the overall goal of assisting the understanding by the international community of emerging challenges and persistent problems in global development, objectives proposed are to strengthen the capacity of developing countries, particularly least developed countries, to implement the Habitat Agenda and urban-related elements of Agenda 21, and to assess the impact of related policies and practices.

Background

46. The implementation of the Habitat Agenda is primarily the responsibility of Governments. International cooperation plays a supporting role in this process, particularly through networking, capacity-building and information exchange and dissemination. The Habitat Agenda calls for Governments to further strengthen and/or establish broad-based participatory national committees. Many countries have now established institutional mechanisms for the implementation of and follow-up to the Habitat Agenda. For some of these countries, the next step in the process is the designation and/or establishment of national and local urban observatories to collect, analyse and apply data and information on current human settlement policies, strategies, trends and conditions as a basis for the policy and decision-making processes.

Relation to medium-term plan

47. The proposal is within the scope and priorities of the medium-term plan, under programme 11 (Human settlements), and will complement relevant activities in that area. It offers a low-cost solution to developing countries in strengthening their capacity related to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and will realize distinct results within two bienniums.

Expected results

48. The implementation of the project will result in major groups in recipient developing countries acquiring core skills and knowledge relating to the analysis, exchange and application of data and information on urban indicators.

Indicators

49. Indicators will include: number of countries indicating that the project has resulted in key groups acquiring core skills and knowledge relating to analysis, exchange and application of data and information on urban indicators.

Duration

50. The following duration is proposed: 1999–2001.

Activities

51. The following activities are proposed:

(a) Development and testing of training aids and methodological tools for the collection, analysis and application of urban indicators, best practices and good policies for the monitoring and implementation of national and local plans of action;

(b) Compilation of selected sets of indicators, best practices and legislation, and their analysis in terms of lessons learned;

(c) Organization of four subregional training and transfer workshops: two in Africa, one in Latin America and one in Asia; these workshops are to be preceded by three regional Internet conferences to assess and match supply with demand for expertise and experience. The workshops will result in the exposure of 120 representatives of national and local government, civic and community leaders, parliamentarians and practising professionals to the application of urban indicators, as well as lessons learned from best practices and examples of enabling policies and legislation;

(d) Organization of an interregional meeting of partners for refining training aids and methodological tools for their continued use and development on-line, and implementation of an on-line classroom. The on-line classroom will enable partners and national committees to continuously benefit from methodological, substantive and normative inputs from global monitoring and implementation activities, as well as to exchange experience and learn from each other.

(For resource requirements, see annex)

F. On-line development centre (Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat)

Objectives

52. Under the overall objective of assisting the understanding by the international community of emerging challenges and persistent problems in global development, the objective proposed is to further South-South dialogue through increased communication on development issues.

Background

53. The implementation of the recommendations of recent United Nations global conferences would be considerably enhanced through the establishment of a central capacity to facilitate information exchange. The proposed centre would save on transportation costs by setting up virtual facilities for drafting and negotiating reports and other documents, conducting workshops and seminars, and accessing information on technical cooperation experts and individuals and institutions working in development fields via the Internet. The project will provide an innovative solution to undertake multilateral and multi-purpose activities, such as an on-line forum for discussion of development issues, an on-line facility to exchange draft and negotiate documents, and a facility to hold on-line interactive workshops.

Relation to medium-term plan

54. The proposal is within the scope and priorities of the medium-term plan, under programme 28 (Economic and social affairs), subprogramme 28.7 (Global development trends, issues and policies).

Expected results

55. The implementation of the project will result in the availability of an on-line Internet-based facility (on-line development centre), including on-line meeting/training facilities and searchable directories for information on and discussion of development issues. The proposed configuration allows for low-cost communications between groups and individuals, irrespective of locations and time zones, and therefore is particularly suitable for expanding and strengthening South-South dialogue on development. Although more benefits will accrue as experience grows and the network is further upgraded, considerable practical results are expected already within the proposal period.

Indicators

56. Indicators will include: number of users of the centre; number of hits on information sites; number of specialized directories/subdirectories set up within the centre; number of respondents to a user survey rating the usefulness of the centre; and number of countries in which access to the on-line development centre is established.

Duration

57. The following duration is proposed: 1999–2001.

Activities

58. The following activities are proposed:

(a) Set up an on-line development centre and a network of subregional service centres to serve as a forum enabling participants to report, draft, discuss and exchange positions and policy documents;

(b) Set up on-line meeting and training facilities to hold interactive workshops and seminars which can be recorded and reviewed at any time, thus cutting the costs of possible repeat events;

(c) Create an on-line searchable directory to facilitate government officials, contacting individuals and non-governmental organizations to directly access information regarding global, regional and major national development issues, and outcomes of United Nations conferences.

(For resource requirements, see annex)

G. Research network for global policy analysis (Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat)

Objectives

59. Under the overall objective of assisting the understanding by the international community of emerging challenges and persistent problems in global development, the objective proposed is to increase the involvement of developing countries research institutions in global policy analysis, particularly in the examination of emerging issues and critical trends in economic, social and environmental fields.

Background

60. The role of the external economic environment is growing in developing countries. The ability of these countries to sustain growth will depend increasingly on their capacity to analyse current trends in their own and the global economy, and to anticipate possible changes in these trends in order to formulate and implement appropriate policy measures. Many developing countries, especially least developed countries, lack well-trained economic analysts who can provide their decision makers with sufficiently detailed and timely analyses and forecasts. The United Nations Secretariat can help to provide such training and experience through the international macroeconomic research network maintained by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Project LINK. The project aims to increase the involvement of developing country research institutions in Project Link and other mechanisms for global policy analysis, including studies on emerging issues and critical trends in economic, social and environmental fields.

Relation to medium-term plan

61. The proposal is within the scope and priorities of the medium-term plan, under programme 28 (Economic and social affairs), subprogramme 28.7 (Global development trends, issues and policies), and complements policy research aspects of the international network of forecasting experts under Project LINK by introducing a technical assistance component aimed at upgrading the capacities of developing countries, particularly least developed countries, in preparing national and international model-based forecasts.

Expected results

62. The implementation of the project will result in enhanced ability of economic analysts and decision makers in developing countries, especially in least developed countries, to examine and forecast the macroeconomic performance of those countries. The training of researchers through network-based arrangements will be a low-cost solution. The project will offer demonstrable benefits within two bienniums in building developing countries' capacities in macroeconomic analysis and policy-making.

Indicators

63. Indicators will include: number of researchers trained who acquire and apply techniques of macroeconomic analysis; number of databases upgraded; number of research institutions linked to global databases; and number of

Member States indicating that scope and depth of Secretariat reports have increased.

Duration

64. The following duration is proposed: 1999–2000.

Proposed activities

65. The following activities are proposed:

(a) Train researchers from developing countries in advanced techniques of macroeconomic analysis, particularly through networking arrangements;

(b) Upgrade economic and social databases in developing countries and improve access of their research institutions to global databases;

(c) Enhance the capacity of developing country institutions for the implementation of development strategies through strengthening of their ability to monitor national and international macroeconomic trends;

(d) Facilitate the participation of developing country experts in workshops and seminars on macroeconomic policy modelling and forecasting, including Project LINK and other established activities on global policy analysis undertaken by the United Nations.

(For resource requirements, see annex)

H. Activities for the implementation of Agenda 21, the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat)

Objectives

66. Under the overall goal of assisting developing countries in various aspects of the implementation of the global programmes and platforms of action, especially the follow-up to United Nations conferences, objectives proposed are to strengthen the capacity of developing countries, particularly least developed countries, to collect, analyse and apply knowledge, information and expertise related to policy development, with emphasis on the implementation of commitments agreed upon at United Nations conferences.

Background

67. The promotion of the implementation of Agenda 21, the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are priorities of the approved medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001. Policy development, networking, capacity-building, and information exchange and dissemination are essential for the implementation of these programmes. Agenda 21 calls for Governments to prepare national sustainable development strategies, programmes for monitoring their implementation, improving information for decision-making, establishing national councils for sustainable development, and promoting greater participation of civil society groups. The Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the Summit invite Governments to further strengthen and/or establish broad-based participatory national and local mechanisms for implementation and follow-up based on partnerships of Governments (including local government), non-governmental organizations, citizen and professional groups, and the private sector. The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action urge Governments to establish or strengthen appropriate national machineries for the advancement of women and to broaden women's participation and integrate gender analysis into policies and programmes. The project will support efforts of Member States to fully integrate the commitments made in these documents into decision-making and in improving related information systems for decision-making.

Relation to medium-term plan

68. The proposal is within the scope and priorities of the medium-term plan, under programmes 9 (Trade and development), 10 (Environment), 11 (Human settlements) and 28 (Economic and social affairs), particularly subprogrammes 28.2 (Gender issues and advancement of women), 28.4 (Sustainable development) and 28.6 (Population). It will complement relevant activities under those programmes, and will be an effective way to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to implement the declarations and programmes/platforms for action of major United Nations conferences.

Expected results

69. The implementation of the project will result in strengthened capacity of national and local mechanisms, particularly in least developed countries, to collect, analyse and apply knowledge, information and expertise to policy development, with emphasis on (a) the preparation of

national sustainable development strategies, decision-making and national information processes in support of the implementation of chapters 8 and 40 of Agenda 21; (b) programme design, monitoring and evaluating programmes and projects in support of the goals of the World Summit for Social Development; and (c) strengthening national machinery for the advancement of women, women and new technologies, and to support the increased role of women in leadership and public life, as recommended in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. To be implemented within network arrangements, the project will be a low-cost solution to achieve distinct results within the proposed period.

Indicators

70. Indicators will include: number of indicators developed for the implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations Conferences; improved Internet-based electronic connectivity; and number of countries indicating that the project has contributed to their improved capacities with regard to policy development related to United Nations global conferences.

Duration

71. The following duration is proposed: 1999–2001.

Activities

72. The following activities are proposed:

(a) Organization of up to 10 regional consultative meetings to exchange national experience and information on the development and use of national approaches/strategies for and national experience in implementing Agenda 21, the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

(b) Provision of advisory support service to assist least developed countries, as requested, in the preparation of national sustainable development strategies;

(c) Continued support and methodological development of the core list of indicators of sustainable development, in close cooperation with the 22 testing countries, and capacity-building in those countries for fully implementing the indicators programme;

(d) Organization and conduct of regional and subregional workshops in support of capacity-building efforts on indicators of sustainable development, particularly to assist countries in incorporating modern information systems and techniques into national decision-making processes;

(e) Provision of assistance to developing countries in the area of indicators of sustainable development, through regional and subregional expert consultations to address technical issues and problems, identify solutions, and overcome bottlenecks and trouble spots;

(f) Development of prototype mechanisms appropriate for national and local conditions to strengthen participatory programme designs, monitoring and evaluation;

(g) Preparation of guidelines and manuals for the use of conveners and participants in national and local mechanisms regarding the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development;

(h) Preparation of manuals and information material on participatory social assessment techniques;

(i) Organization of six expert group meetings (of 20 participants each) to exchange experience regarding the monitoring of and reporting on national efforts to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, and identification of obstacles to effective implementation and monitoring of progress;

(j) Organization of three interregional workshops for strengthening national machineries for the advancement of women to exchange experiences on efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, with emphasis on women's role in decision-making;

(k) Organization of five Internet conferences on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action to enable women's non-governmental organizations, particularly in developing countries, to share experiences and best practices, and to contribute to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action scheduled for June 2000.

(For resource requirements, see annex)

Annex

Resource requirements, by project

(United States dollars)

Project title	*Amount*
Promotion of electronic commerce (UNCTAD)	1 980 000
Capacity-building in economic and social policy analysis in Africa through the networking of expertise (ECA)	2 500 000
Extension of access of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to Mercure satellite telecommunication system for interconnectivity in environmental information and data (UNEP)	2 215 000
Computer and telecommunication system for international and national drug control (UNDCP)	1 100 000
Capacity-building and networking for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda in least developed countries (Habitat)	945 000
On-line development centre (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)	510 000
Research network for global policy analysis (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)	725 000
Activities for the implementation of Agenda 21, the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)	2 330 000
Total	**12 305 000**